

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend the claims as follows. This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1 – 11 (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) A gas cooking surface, comprising:
- at least one gas burner;
  - a gas supply coupled to said gas burner for supplying gas thereto;
  - a control device for adjusting the heating capacity stages of said gas burner;
  - said gas burner depending on said adjusted heating capacity stage, operates in one of a continuous mode in which said gas is supplied continuously to said gas burner or a clocked mode in which said gas burner is supplied with said gas in an ~~intermittent~~ controlled pulsating manner;
  - said control device including a touch contact for switching between said heating capacity stages;
  - said touch contact switches controlling said heating capacity stages associated with said continuous mode and also with said clocked mode;
  - and
  - said control device automatically controls said burner to a starting heating capacity stage in which said gas burner operates in said continuous mode when said gas burner is switched on by said touch contact, said control device operating to control said burner ~~to in~~ in a continuous mode starting heating capacity stage ~~irrespective of~~ without regard to any conflicting control instructions, thereby operating said burner in a continuous mode of operation upon actuation of the starting touch control switch ~~that may have inputted by a user via said touch contact.~~

13. (Previously Presented) The gas cooking surface according to claim 12, including said gas burner is switched on by a first actuation of said touch contact.
14. (Previously Presented) The gas cooking surface according to claim 13, including said starting heating capacity stage automatically adjusted by said control device is a minimal heating capacity stage in said continuous mode.
15. (Previously Presented) The gas cooking surface according to claim 13, including said touch contact having at least one of a plus button for increasing the heating capacity and a minus button for reducing said heating capacity.
16. (Previously Presented) The gas cooking surface according to claim 15, including said gas burner switched on by a first actuation of at least one of said plus button and said minus button.
17. (Previously Presented) The gas cooking surface according to claim 16, including said touch contact having both of said plus button for increasing said heating capacity and said minus button for reducing said heating capacity and a maximum heating capacity stage in said continuous mode is set when said minus button is first actuated to switch on said gas burner.
18. (Previously Presented) The gas cooking surface according to claim 15, including said touch contact having both of said plus button for increasing said heating capacity and said minus button for reducing said heating capacity and said gas burner is switched off by simultaneously actuating said plus button and said minus button.

19. (Previously Presented) The gas cooking surface according to claim 15, including said touch contact having both of said plus button for increasing said heating capacity and said minus button for reducing said heating capacity and said gas burner is switched off by actuating said minus button in a minimum heating power stage in said clocked mode.
20. (Previously Presented) The gas cooking surface according to claim 15, including said touch contact having both of said plus button for increasing said heating capacity and said minus button for reducing said heating capacity and said gas burner is switched off by actuating said plus button in a maximum heating power stage in said clocked mode.
21. (Previously Presented) The gas cooking surface according to claim 15, including said gas burner operates in an upper heating capacity range in said continuous mode and in a lower heating capacity range in said clocked mode.
22. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a gas cooking surface, comprising:
  - providing at least one gas burner;
  - coupling a gas supply to said gas burner for supplying gas thereto;
  - adjusting the heating capacity stages of said gas burner;
  - said gas burner depending on said adjusted heating capacity stage,
  - operating in one of a continuous mode in which said gas is supplied continuously to said gas burner or a clocked mode in which said gas burner is supplied with said gas in an intermittently;
  - said control device including a touch contact for switching between said heating capacity stages;

a user touching said touch contact for switching said heating capacity stages in said continuous mode and also in said clocked mode; and automatically adjusting said burner to a starting heating capacity stage in which said gas burner automatically operates in said continuous mode when said gas burner is switched on by touching said touch contact.

23. (Previously Presented) The operating method according to claim 22, including switching on said gas burner by a first actuating of said touch contact.
24. (Previously Presented) The operating method according to claim 23, including automatically adjusting said starting heating capacity stage to a minimal heating capacity stage in said continuous mode.
25. (Previously Presented) The operating method according to claim 23, including said touch contact having at least one of a plus button for increasing the heating capacity and a minus button for reducing said heating capacity.
26. (Previously Presented) The operating method according to claim 22, including switching on said gas burner by a first actuating of at least one of said plus button and said minus button.
27. (Previously Presented) The operating method according to claim 26, including providing said touch contact with both of said plus button for increasing said heating capacity and said minus button for reducing said heating capacity and setting a maximum heating capacity stage in said continuous mode when said minus button is first actuated for switching on said gas burner.

28. (Previously Presented) The operating method according to claim 22, including providing said touch contact with both of said plus button for increasing said heating capacity and said minus button for reducing said heating capacity and switching off said gas burner by simultaneously actuating said plus button and said minus button.
29. (Previously Presented) The operating method according to claim 22, including providing said touch contact with both of said plus button for increasing said heating capacity and said minus button for reducing said heating capacity and switching off said gas burner by actuating said minus button in a minimum heating power stage in said clocked mode.
30. (Previously Presented) The operating method according to claim 22, including providing said touch contact with both of said plus button for increasing said heating capacity and said minus button for reducing said heating capacity and switching off said gas burner by actuating said plus button in a maximum heating power stage in said clocked mode.
31. (Previously Presented) The operating method according to claim 22, including operating said gas burner in an upper heating capacity range in said continuous mode and operating said gas burner in a lower heating capacity range in said clocked mode.